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Gator Times



USS NASSAU (LHA 4) THE NAVY'S "TOP GATOR"



IN IKE'S WAKE

Gator Times



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On the Cover:

Sailors from Nassau's Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul and Recovery (GATOR) team make their way through the devastated city Sept. 18.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez



Gator Times is a product of the USS Nassau (LHA 4) Public Affairs Office. The editorial content of this newsletter does not necessarily reflect the official views of the command or any government agency and does not imply endorsement.

Gator Times

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You may notice this issue of The Gator Times hit the street a little later than usual. It's been an eventful month aboard Nassau and we wanted to include late breaking news, rather than wait until next month.

We started September preparing for inspections and recertifying many of our programs.

We completed our Supply Material Certification with flying colors. The inspectors went on record saying Nassau was the best they've ever seen! Also, the Supply Department's Food Service Division qualified as a finalist in the Navy's annual Ney Award competition.

Nassau's Chief Petty Officers' Mess welcomed its eight newest Chiefs, following time-honored tradition.

Of course, the biggest news is Nassau's mission to provide defense support to civil authority following the devastation left in Galveston, Texas, by Hurricane Ike.

Nassau's unique capabilities as a multipurpose platform offered military and civilian planners a variety of options for helping to bring the city's critical infrastructure back online.

In addition to embarking Commander, Amphibious Squadron Six, Assault Craft Unit Two, Beachmaster Unit Two, Fleet Surgical Team Two and Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron Twenty Eight, as we did during our recent deployment, we also embarked the Seabees of Amphibious Construction Battalion Two's Disaster Relief Team Two.

Captain's Call



Capt. James R. Boorujy
Commanding Officer
USS Nassau (LHA 4)

Nassau's Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Recovery (GATOR) - teams of Sailors from throughout the ship who volunteered to provide additional manpower ashore - distributed tons of food, water and ice to thousands of the city's residents left in need. They even went door-to-door to help hundreds of house-bound Galvestonians.

The Seabees and Nassau's GATOR teams provided the expertise, equipment and manpower to clear debris and help reopen the Port of Galveston, and Scholes International Airport.

Nassau has proven once again why it deserves to be called "Top Gator."

CMC Corner

CMDCM(AW/SW) Stan Kopiczak



Nassau Family and Friends,

Now is a great time for us to think about and prepare for 2008 Hurricane Season. It's already been an active season.

Hurricane Gustav threatened New Orleans three years after Hurricane Katrina. Tropical Storm Hanna soaked the Mid-Atlantic and New England. And Hurricane Ike wreaked havoc on Galveston, Texas.

You need to put together a disaster preparedness plan for you and your families, and build a hurricane

preparedness kit.

Even a couple of days without water and lights can threaten your family's well-being and create hardship that can be avoided, or minimized with proper planning.

If you are married and have immediate family who might be affected, you should make yourself familiar with the Navy Family Accountability Assessment System, available online at www.navyfamily.navy.mil.

This system is in place to help Navy personnel account for family members in the event of an emergency.

Nassau's current status as Ready Duty ARG makes us available to get underway within 96 hours to provide support if needed in the aftermath of these storms.

The success of our recent mission in Galveston is evidence that amphibious assault ships like Nassau are uniquely suited to offer such support.

Nassau supports Ike recovery efforts

By MC3(SW) David Wycaver
Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic

USS Nassau (LHA 4) anchored off the island city of Galveston, Texas, the morning of Sept. 17 to provide defense support to civil authority in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike. The mayor of Galveston arrived aboard Nassau via helicopter to help coordinate the ship's role in assisting with recovery efforts.

Mayor Lyda Ann Thomas spoke with Commander, Amphibious Squadron Six (CPR-6) Capt. Robert G. Lineberry, Nassau Commanding Officer Capt. James R. Boorujy, and other military and civilian officials to discuss the specific areas where help was most needed.

"It's nice for the city of Galveston and other Texas residents to see the Navy and other military units helping the disaster victims," said Sandra Coachman, a federal coordinating officer with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. "It's certainly a huge morale booster, and it shows the United States does care about what's going on here."

Nassau and its crew possess many essential resources in aiding those in need and assisting with many different tasks during the humanitarian relief efforts.

"Nassau offers a tremendous amount of capabilities

to effectively respond to real-world situations," said Lineberry. "We also have search-and-rescue teams and landing craft units for supply and personnel transfer."

"Within my crew and the embarked detachments, we have a tremendous amount of repair capability that can tackle a variety of tasks," said Boorujy. "I could send ashore a group of 100 or 200 Sailors, and they could pretty much tackle anything that comes their way."

Officials who participated in the meeting noted the positive impact of having the military involved in helping those affected by Hurricane Ike.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for the defense side of the federal government to help with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the disaster assistance for the State of Texas," said Coachman.

"We have a tremendous capability to help support the efforts of disaster response. This is what the United States Navy trains for and is ready to perform at any time," Lineberry said.

Amphibious Construction Battalion Two's (ACB-2) Disaster Recovery Team (DRT), embarked on

See "Hurricane," Page 10



Nassau Sailors volunteered by the hundreds to assist in Galveston's recovery effort. Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Response (GATOR) teams ranged from 60 to 120 Sailors and performed tasks such as distributing food, water and ice to residents and lending additional manpower to debris clearing efforts.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez

Texan Sailors lend a helping hand

By MC3(SW) David Wycaver
Fleet Public Affairs Center Atlantic

As USS Nassau (LHA 4) supported recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Ike, many Sailors involved had ties to the affected areas.

"I'm originally from Houston, and I'm the only one in my family who left the area, the rest of my family still resides there," said Aviation Electronics Technician Senior Chief (AW/SW) Raul Castro, Nassau's quality assurance officer.

"The majority of them did lose power, suffer structural damage and other effects from the storm, but they're all okay"

"I'm from La Porte, Texas, and a lot of individuals in the area were affected by Hurricane Ike, including my parents and the house I grew up in," said Aviation Ordnance Airman (AW) Cody Blair.

"My aunt was also affected by the storm, and her vacation home was ruined, but no one was hurt or injured."

Seeing Galveston after the storm was especially tough for one Nassau Sailor.

Quartermaster Seaman Alberto Fuentes grew up in Galveston. He said that when he left two years ago to join the Navy, he never thought he would return someday to give back through his military service to the community who gave him so much growing up.

"I grew up in this very house I stand in front of and lived here for over 10 years," Fuentes said. "I met a lot of good people here and have many fond memories attached to this place and the community."

"The last time I was home to visit was in July. Everything looked good and conditions were normal like they have always been."

"Now as I sit here assessing the effects Hurricane Ike has had on my house and the neighborhood I've loved over the years, I see nothing but devastation and destruction."

Texans and others alike say it is meaningful to have the opportunity to give back to these communities.

"It feels great to be here helping out," said



Quartermaster Seaman Alberto Fuentes of Nassau's Navigation Department removes debris from his family's home in Galveston, Texas.
Photo by MC3(SW) David Wycaver.

Operations Specialist Third Class (SW/AW) Terrance Bellock, Amphibious Squadron Six operations yeoman and also a Texan.

"I joined the military to help out, and to be able to participate in something like this is rewarding for so many reasons."

"It feels really good being out here and working together with everyone to make a difference," Blair added. "The hurricane has devastated so many people and it's nice to give back to those in need."



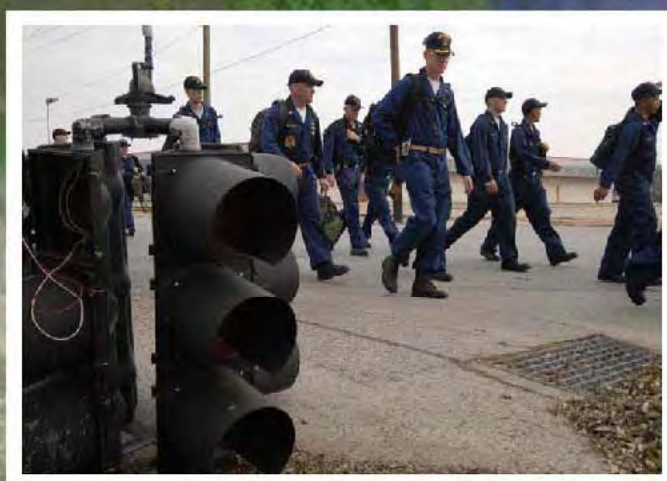
Sailors from USS Nassau's volunteer Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Response (GATOR) exit an MH-60S helicopter at the city's Ball High School, located in one of the few areas of the island that wasn't inundated by the storm surge.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez



Sailors from USS Nassau's volunteer Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Response (GATOR) make their way through the city's devastated streets, ready to provide support to civil authorities in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez

Sailors from USS Nassau's volunteer Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Response (GATOR) make their way from the landing zone to points of distribution around the city, where they assisted in delivering food, water and ice to residents.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez.

Sailors from USS Nassau's volunteer Galveston Assistance Team - Overhaul Response (GATOR) and Texas Army National Guardsmen distribute food, ice and water to residents at one of several points of distribution around the city.
Photo by MC2(SW) Michael P. Cortez.



GALVESTON, TEXAS: IN IKE'S WAKE

Nassau welcomes its newest Chiefs

By MC1 Mary Popejoy
USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau's (LHA 4) crew gathered in the Hangar Bay to witness the pinning of the ship's newest Chief Petty Officers Sept. 16, 2008.

Nassau's newest Chiefs are: Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (AW/SW) Frederick Benjamin, Chief Boatswain's Mate (SW/AW) Cherise Chase, Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) (AW/SW) Donald Hynson, Chief Yeoman (SW/AW) John Monarch, Chief Electrician's Mate (SW) Aaron O'Brien, Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (AW/SW) Duane Robinson, Chief Aviation Electrician (AW/SW) Edwin Santiago, and Chief Machinist's Mate (SW) Patrick Thompson.

The new Chiefs underwent a six-week Induction process before their acceptance into the Chiefs' Mess, making the transition from First Class Petty Officer.

While the exact details are never revealed, the Induction is conducted in accordance with the CPO Mission, Vision and Guiding Principles:

- Deckplate Leadership
- Institutional and Technical Expertise
- Professionalism
- Character
- Loyalty
- Active Communication
- A Sense of Heritage

"Induction was tough for me, but I learned a lot about myself and what I can do to help my Sailors excel in the Navy," Santiago said. "I have a better understanding of what my responsibilities are and how I can truly make a difference as a Chief."

For Chase, she's going to take the knowledge she gained in the last six weeks and apply it to the situations she will encounter daily.

"Just because it's over doesn't mean all that knowledge goes away. I will continue to reflect on that knowledge, whether I am on the Nassau or another command," she said.

"The new Chiefs have learned valuable lessons, and are eager to make a difference in the Navy and be good mentors to our junior Sailors."



Nassau's newest Chief Petty Officers: (Front) Chief Yeoman (SW/AW) John Monarch, Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) (AW/SW) Donald Hynson, Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (AW/SW) Duane Robinson and Chief Boatswain's Mate (SW/AW) Cherise Chase. (Back) Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate (AW/SW) Edwin Santiago, Chief Machinist Mate (SW) Patrick Thompson, Chief Aviation Ordnanceman (AW/SW) Frederick Benjamin and Chief Electrician's Mate (SW) Aaron O'Brien.
Photo by MC1 Mary Popejoy.

"Induction taught me that the decisions I make could have a negative impact on someone, but I have to stick with my decision regardless of the consequences," Benjamin said.

"It was truly an eye-opening experience that made me understand that I need to lead from the front in order to lead my Sailors and enforce the Navy's policies and standards," Monarch said.

As the Chiefs took their places in the ranks of the Chiefs' Mess, Nassau Command Master Chief CMDCM(SW/AW) Stan Kopiczak offered a piece of advice.

"We have given you the very basic knowledge of being 'The Chief,' the rest is up to you," Kopiczak said.

"Being 'The Chief' is a constant learning process. Never give up the drive to learn.

"If you continue learning you will succeed and you will move on in your career. Take what you have already learned and seek additional knowledge and do what ever it takes to be the best Chief in the Navy.

"That is my challenge to you."

Nassau Sailor named Afghanistan BJOQ

USS Nassau's ABH3(AW) Anthony Shepperd garners honors as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix - Afghanistan's Blue Jacket of the Quarter.

From USS Nassau Public Affairs

Capt. D. K. Woodhouse, the officer in charge of U.S. Navy training teams embedded with Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix – Afghanistan, named a USS Nassau (LHA 4) Sailor serving as an individual augmentee at the task force's Blue Jacket of the Quarter July 15.

Woodhouse recognized Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 3rd Class (AW) Anthony Shepperd for his work with an eight-person embedded training team operating in one of the most dangerous and remote forward operating bases in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, from April to June 2008.

Helmand Province, in southwest Afghanistan, is mainly a desert region. The Helmand River provides water for irrigation. It has a population of 740,000 and a surface area of 23,058 square miles.

In addition to being a hotbed of insurgent activity by Taliban fighters and warring tribal groups, Helmand

is the world's largest opium-producing region, responsible for 42% of the world's supply.

Shepperd is one of 15 Nassau Sailors currently deployed as individual augmentees.

Serving as a petroleum, oils and lubricants mentor on the team, Shepperd is responsible for managing all fuels for Afghan National Army (ANA) Camp Shorabak.

He recently assumed the mentorship of the base's dining facility officer and 15 ANA soldiers.

Shepperd is responsible for 97 light tactical vehicles and 15 tanker trucks used for critical combat missions.

He also coordinates the testing and receipt of fuel for the base's power plant, which provides electricity to more than 4,000 coalition and ANA personnel.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead (left) and Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy MCPON (SW/FMF) Joe R. Campa Jr. (right) were both present to congratulate ABH3(AW) Anthony Shepperd on his selection as Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix - Afghanistan Blue Jacket of the Quarter.
Photo by MCSN Jonathan Pankau



Commander, Second Fleet visits USS Nassau

From USS Nassau Public Affairs

Commander, U.S. Second Fleet Vice Adm. Melvin G. Williams Jr., visited USS Nassau (LHA 4) Aug. 15 to tour the ship, meet the crew and discuss his guidance to the fleet and its impact at the unit level.

It was his first ship visit since assuming command aboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) at Naval Station Norfolk Aug. 8.

He also visited USS Cole (DDG 67) and USS Oklahoma City (SSN 723). Second Fleet Command Master Chief CMDCM(SW/AW) Robert R. Hart accompanied him on the tour.

After a brief meeting with Nassau Commanding Officer Capt. James R. Boorujy, Williams then met with a group of officers, chiefs and prospective chiefs in Nassau's Wardroom, where he discussed his guidance to the fleet.

"First, let me say it's a privilege for me support and

serve you as the commander of Second Fleet, and it's a pleasure to come out to the fleet and be with the Sailors who are actually doing the work," Williams told the group.

"I have an appreciation of the challenges of operating a ship at sea. Because I have that appreciation, I'm going to do everything that I can to ensure that your captain and command master chief have what they need to help you accomplish your mission.

"My guidance is pretty simple and focuses on three things -- fleet operations to achieve the mission, providing ready maritime forces for global assignment, and teaming with our allies and partners in executing of our maritime strategy.

"With fleet operations what I want to emphasize is safe and effective operations at sea. That means

See "Second Fleet" page 10



Commander, U.S. Second Fleet Vice Adm. Melvin G. Williams greets BMC (Sel) (SWAW) Cherise T. Chase during a visit aboard Nassau Aug. 15.
Photo by MCSN Jonathan Parikau

"Hurricane," from Page 3

Nassau, arrived in Galveston Sept. 18 to support relief efforts.

"The main mission of our unit is to provide relief support wherever it's needed, whether by construction, electrical assistance, clearing debris, chopping down trees, search and rescue or just helping to fix facilities," said Builder 2nd Class (SCW) Anthony Marshall.

"Whatever the relief efforts call for, we are there to provide."

The unit hit the beach via landing craft from Assault Craft Unit Two. They began using their large equipment and versatile capabilities to provide emergency debris clearance at critical infrastructure, such as the Port of Galveston.

"Everybody in the unit will play a huge part, ensuring we all handle our individual responsibilities for the team and coming together as one to help those we are here to help," said Steelworker Constructionman Recruit Lane Adger.

"We have a very good team, and it is one team, one fight. Everyone's skills are augmented through one another, and there's so much training involved to help prepare us to step in at anytime and get the job done," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class John Southwell, ACB-2's medical department leading petty officer.

A few Sailors involved in the mission offered their personal feelings on what it means to be a part of the recovery process.

"I'm originally from La Porte, Texas, and this storm damaged the home I grew up in along with my aunt's vacation home," said Aviation Ordnance Airman (AW) Cody Blair.

"It feels really good to know I can help make a difference in restoring the area I once called home."

Nassau's Galveston Assistance Team – Overhaul and Response (GATOR) sent teams of volunteers from the ship's company ashore daily to assist in distributing food, water and ice.

The teams also provided additional manpower needed to clear debris get the city's critical systems back up and running.

Nassau weighed anchor Sept. 23 to return to homeport in Norfolk, Va., after a week of supporting local, state and federal civil authorities in Galveston's recovery effort.

Nassau's Sailors and Marines accomplished a

variety of disaster relief tasks set out by local officials.

In the week Nassau Sailors were ashore they:

- Distributed 16,440 meals ready-to-eat
- Distributed 13,835 cases of water
- Distributed 25,285 bags of ice
- Cleared 1,075 cubic yards of debris
- Delivered medical aid for 12 minor medical cases.

"Our Sailors and Marines were able to come to the aid of their fellow Americans," Lineberry said.

"Disaster relief and humanitarian assistance is a capability that we take around the world, and it was just as important to help our own citizens. We will sail away from here proud of our accomplishments."


"Second Fleet," from Page 9

properly training and certifying so we can defend our homeland and achieve our mission.

"Under ready forces, one of the things I want to do is develop leaders. I think it's my responsibility as commander of Second Fleet to ensure we develop leaders, allow people to realize their full potential, ensure every person is treated with dignity and respect, and ensure opportunities are out there for those who choose to pursue those opportunities."

Williams elaborated by saying that he would work with the Chief's Mess to get back to the basics of developing Navy leaders, which he said he sees that as a fundamental to everything the Navy does.

"Finally, we need to look at how we can best prepare ourselves to interact with our allies and partners, whether that is through cultural awareness or learning new skill sets so we're better able to work with new partners when called upon."



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Workout for a good cause

Two upcoming events allow you to work up a sweat and raise money for those in need.

From USS Nassau Public Affairs

USS Nassau (LHA 4) Sailors and Marines are invited to take part in two upcoming events that will allow them to not only get in an excellent workout, but also help raise money for those in need.

The first is called Fight Gone Bad III (FGB III) and will be held aboard Nassau Sept. 27. FGB III has two purposes: raise awareness and funds to fight prostate cancer through an organization called Athletes for a Cure, and to raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project.

The second event is Step Out Walk to Fight Diabetes on Oct. 4 at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront, to raise funds for the American Diabetes Association.

Gunnery Sgt. Ken Roberts, who conducts physical training aboard Nassau, as well as

in the local community as a certified Cross-Fit trainer, is organizing the events.

"Fight Gone Bad is a fun event where participants get to compete against each other and against all other CrossFit affiliates, and come together for a brutal workout and a good cause," Roberts said. "Fight Gone Bad II raised \$550,000 last year.

"Walk to Fight Diabetes is a fund-raising walk that benefits the ADA's mission to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by the disease."

Contact Roberts at robertsk@lha4.navy.mil or call 1-757-803-6370 for more information.



Gunnery Sgt. Ken Roberts and MMCM(SW/AW) John Engelbert demonstrate self-defense techniques for midshipmen during a physical training session on Nassau's recent deployment. Photo by MC2 Amanda Clayton